



**AARP Testimony in Support of S.B. 111,
AAC the Penalty for Causing Harm to a Vulnerable User of a Public Way
Transportation Committee
Feb. 22, 2012**

On behalf of our nearly 600,000 Connecticut members, AARP asks members of the Transportation Committee to support S.B. 111, which enhances penalties for drivers causing harm to pedestrians and other “vulnerable users.” This proposal lays the ground work for safer roads, especially for older residents who are disproportionately killed in pedestrian fatalities.

While adults 65 and older represent less than 13 percent of the population, they represented about 19 percent of the pedestrian fatalities in 2008. Compared to their younger counterparts, an older pedestrian is 61 percent more likely to die from a crash than a younger pedestrian.

S.B. 111 adds penalties for negligent drivers that harm pedestrians and other vulnerable users. Specifically, the legislation requires negligent drivers to attend a motor vehicle operator's retraining program and perform community service. These drivers can also face fines up to five thousand dollars. AARP believes the legislation will provide a deterrent and help change reckless driving behaviors that put pedestrians and other vulnerable users at risk.

Oregon was the first state to pass a “vulnerable users” law in 2007. Since then, at least ten states including Connecticut have considered “vulnerable user” legislation. The proposal has attracted bipartisan support in Connecticut and AARP believes vulnerable user legislation will build on Connecticut’s 2009 Complete Streets law to encourage walking, biking and other non-motorized methods of transportation.

Safety is a major reason why people choose not to walk to local destinations. In 2008, AARP conducted a survey of people age 50 and over and found nearly 47 percent felt they could not safely cross main roads close to their home. S.B. 111 could help support pedestrian safety by deterring drivers from negligent behavior that puts vulnerable users at risk of injury or death. AARP supports public policy that encourages safer streets for all users, regardless of their method of transportation. We look forward to working with you to make Connecticut roadways safer for older pedestrians and other vulnerable users. Thank you.

Pedestrian Fatalities by Age, 2008						
Age	Connecticut			United States		
	Fatalities	Population	Fatalities per 100,000	Fatalities	Population	Fatalities per 100,000
16-24	3	433,698	0.69	568	38,742,194	1.47
25-49	6	1,199,383	0.50	1,729	106,000,489	1.63
50+	24	1,155,114	2.08	1,866	93,854,500	1.99
65+	13	480,326	2.71	875	38,799,891	2.26

Source: AARP Public Policy Institute analysis of 2008 Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) data.

* Note that the number of fatalities of those aged 50+ includes the number of fatalities of those aged 65+.